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mystery; and the problems which the absolute is invoked to explain find a solvent in our human experience.

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WHAT KIND OF REALISM?

IN a previous paper in this JOURNAL,[1] I attempted to summarize the arguments against "natural" realism—that doctrine which purports to crystallize the view of the "natural" man, that the very data of his visual and tactile experience are identical with, *i. e.*, go to make up, the "things" in the midst of which he lives and moves. According to that view, the "green" that my experience includes when I look at a tree exists at the tree-point in the world-order, and is not a copy or an effect of what there exists. That is to say, "natural" realism ignores the representative nature of perception, ignores the distinction between the stimulus of perception, the source from which (in the case of sight) ether-waves radiate, and the datum existing in experience after those waves have hit the eye, ignores, to say no more, the time-difference between the stimulus-fact and the experienced-fact.

Obvious as this representative nature of perception is, the temptation to "epistemological monism" is so great that it is a satisfaction to read, in one of Professor Dewey's recent papers,[2] that "it is easily demonstrable that there is a numerical duplicity between the astronomical star and the visible light," that "the astronomical star is a real object . . . the visible light is another real object." Generalized, this is to say that there is a numerical duplicity (but not necessarily a difference in substance, as, physical *vs.* mental) between stimulus-fact and sensation-fact. With these words, as with much in Professor Dewey's characteristically brilliant paper, I find myself in joyous sympathy. Surely we can all agree that the qualia which exist in a man's experience, and which are to him, as he looks, a given star or tree, are not the same existences as the "astronomical star" or the botanical tree. Without asserting what the star and tree of physical science are or are not, at least this "visible light," this visible greenness, are numerically different existences, existing later in time, and largely dependent for their nature upon the characteristics of the perceiver's sense-organs and brain.

Our thanks then to Professor Dewey! But there are certain other statements of his that seem to me questionable and so may serve as texts for the inqury that I suggested at the close of my previous paper and propose here to outline. He tells us that "contemporary realists have frequently and clearly expounded the physical explanation of such cases as have been cited"—the converging railway tracks, the star, pressing the eyeball, etc.—and is frankly vexed with the idealists for not accepting this explanation.[3] Now, personally, I am not an idealist. But if, as one would judge from the columns of this JOURNAL, the idealist is the under dog nowadays, let us be sure to do him full justice! It seems to me, for one, that he has a simple and consistent account to give of these cases, and therefore, even when an adequate realistic account is offered him, need not necessarily bite at the bait; and, moreover, that the accounts which the neo-realists have been offering him of such cases are for the most part so far from adequate that he is thoroughly justified in considering them still as cases that make for his view. Surely, if he is careful in his phraseology (but the realist must remember that in this matter the idealist is at a disadvantage, the practical language of every day being hopelessly realistic, and the expression of the facts in consistently idealistic language a clumsy and confusing matter) he does not commit the fallacy which Professor Dewey ascribes to him. He does not begin, for instance, with a single realistic object, and then, on pushing the eyeball, decide that "there ain't no such animal." He simply finds that on a realistic basis such an experience is difficult to explain, whereas it is very simply statable on an idealistic basis, as: when a single-object experience is followed by a pushing-the-eyeball experience, there is thereupon a double-object experience. Of course some idealists, especially the earlier ones, have put their arguments in ways that justly provoke criticism. But the underlying meaning of these arguments remains a sharp challenge to realism.

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[1] Vol. VIII., page 365.

[2] This JOURNAL, Vol. VIII., page 395.

The point is, that all these cases can easily be described in terms of actual and potential sensations, while a description in terms of objects leads to grave difficulties. Suppose, for example, the realist is looking at a tree. The idealist would have said that he was having a tree-experience; but the realist says that this tree-that-he-sees is a physical tree, outside of him. He then shakes his eyeball. The tree-that-he-sees moves. But is it conceivable that a physical tree outside of him moves when he shakes his eyeball? So long as that green datum was still it was easy to think of it as a physical tree "out there." When it moves, it is no longer easy so to think of it. No wonder the idealist loves such cases! Especially since early realism was of this "natural" type. But now, if the realist retracts his naïve belief, and admits, with Professor Dewey and the present

[3] *Ibid.*, page 395.

writer and probably most contemporary realists, that the tree-datum-that-exists-within-his-experience (the moving-tree-datum—let us call it *existence B*) is an effect of but not identical with the tree-from-which-ether-waves-radiate (*existence A*), this difficulty is solved, but another arises. The coast is by no means yet clear for the realist. "Frequent and clear" explanations of the situation may exist in contemporary realistic writing, but where, oh, where are they to be found! The crux of the difficulty is this: *where* in the world of the realist does *B* exist? Must we not admit that unless the realist can give a thoroughgoing answer to this question, the idealist still has rather the better of the argument?

That there is a satisfactory answer to this question, and that a complete realistic explanation of the situation in perception is possible, I do not doubt. Several attempts at answering it have been made, but they are not free from objections and have generally been rejected by realists. It seems actually to be the case that the average realist refuses to recognize the need of explanation. When he has declared that perception is a "perfectly natural event," and has shown that a camera likewise produces an image which is an effect and representative of an outer object, he seems to think he has solved the problem. But the fact is, he has not touched it. There are more existences to account for in the perception case than in the camera case. The organism is indeed like a camera. There is produced in the brain through the eyes a physical perception-event (call it *existence C*) which varies concomitantly with the object looked at, and may therefore be called not only an effect, but in some sense a representative of that object—the more legitimately, as it actually serves as a clue for the guiding of the organism in its dealings with it. But does the realist think that this brain-event, *C, is* the green-moving-datum, *B?* If not, where does this latter existence, the surest of all existences, have its habitation? Where are we to put it in our physical scheme? If we have no place for it, how can we think we have given a clear explanation of the facts of perception?

We are not allowed to say that it exists in the mind. The very idea that we have minds seems to be repugnant to the neo-realist. And indeed, if such a statement were made as an explanation of the difficulty, it would be but a verbal one. Calling the fact *B* mental, solves no problem. We have still to ask how it is related to the other existences, *A* and *C*. Here is a well-known physical chain of events, from *A,* through ether-waves, eyes, and nerve-waves, to *C,* and then out again into some muscular reaction. But nowhere in this chain of events do we find *B*. The physical order seems complete and self-sufficing without it. There is no room for it. Instinctively we identify *B* with *A*. It is the tree, what we see of the tree. But if my previous article holds, if Professor Dewey's statement holds, that "there is a numerical duplicity between the astronomical star and the visible light," between, in this case, the botanical tree and the visible green-moving fact (for the only difference between the two cases is that the time-difference between *A* and *B* is more striking in the former case), that refuge is definitely barred out. *B* exists at a later moment than *A*. *A* may have been annihilated in the meanwhile and may not be existing when *B* exists. *B* does exist simultaneously (or at least nearly simultaneously) with *C;* that is all that we seem to know about the relation of *B* to the *A–C* chain of events, except that *B,* like *C,* seems to be, in some sort, a representative of *A,* since it is the sign in our experience of our dealings with *A*. Are we to be left then with our *B*'s simply hanging on to our *C*'s, without any real footing in the world, with a time of existence but no place? If we call them mental, we have the well-known "psychophysical parallelism" between our *B*'s and *C*'s. This is certainly a mysterious relation; mental *B*'s clinging like barnacles at certain spots in the physical universe, but not really *being* there. If we call them physical, we have an equally mysterious physicophysical parallelism, a second set of physical realities existing at the moment of our *C*'s, but still with no place found for them. Truly, they are adrift in the deep!

One reason for not calling our *B*'s mental lies perhaps in the dualistic implications of that word. The neo-realist is convinced (one wonders if it be not sometimes an *a priori* conviction rather than a humble generalization from experience!) that there are not two substances, mind and matter. Therefore we must call everything "physical"; or, at least, "natural"—"mental" being thus made equivalent to "supernatural"! Professor Dewey likewise waxes satirical over the habit of calling such *B*'s as the visible convergence of railway tracks, or the vsible light of a star, mental. "Is a photograph, then, to be conceived as a psychical somewhat?"[4] But in the case of a camera (apart from perception by an observer) there *is* no *B;* there is only a chain of events loosely similar to the *A–C* chain of object-to-brain events. There is but one event at the moment when the photograph is taken, not two; a certain molecular change in the plate, corresponding to *C,* the molecular change in the brain, or to an earlier event in the *A–C* chain, the molecular change in the eye. There is no datum-within-experience, no *B,* existing at that moment, as there is in the case of perception. There is no mysterious parallelism, no problem, nothing that there is any temptation to call mental.

Personally, I disbelieve in the dualistic theory, and should be

[4] *Ibid.,* page 393.

quite willing to give up the word "mental" altogether. But I can not see why it should be such a red rag to a realist. Let us agree that any dualistic implications are illegitimate in advance of the establishment of a dualistic theory, and let us use the word in a merely denotative sense, to include our *B*'s, and such other facts as dreams, wishes, pleasure, sorrow, and the like, for which there is likewise no known place available in the physical world. We shall still find the word a useful generic term for these numerous, important, and indisputably real facts. It is, at any rate, the commonly accepted name for these facts. No doubt, the natural man looks upon these same *B*'s as the actual things among which he moves, *i. e.*, as if they were the *A*'s which cause them, and at such times he calls them not mental, but physical. But as soon as you show him the impossibility of that "natural" realism, he hastens to call his perception-datum mental, the green-moving-datum, *e. g.*, a mental image of the really outer tree. It may still be that this fact, *B*, belongs to the same world as *A* and *C*, that it is as "natural" an event as the photographic image of a scene or the echo of a sound. Nevertheless, why disdain the common name for it? I hear a partial repetition of a sound. Why jump to the conclusion that it is an echo? The only answer is, that is what we *call* it. Why jump to the conclusion that these particular events we have specified are "mental"? The only answer is, again, that such is the common generic name for them.

It is presumably true that "the seen light is an event" "standing in a process continuous with the star." Though, as to that, if it can not be located anywhere in particular, and if it has no discoverable relations of energy with any part of the physical chain of events proceeding from the star, it is difficult to see how knowledge can have "supervened" that it does stand in such a continuous process. And, moreover, even granting that it is a link in the process somewhere, is it safe to assert that "since the seen light is an event within a continuous process, there is no point of view from which its 'reality' contrasts with that of the star"?[5] Certainly the reason why the writer has, at times, spoken of the "real" star, contrasting that existence with the "perception of the star," has had nothing to do with any denial of the place of the latter in a continuous process. The "real" star is the star that astronomy describes, the star that is moving at so many miles a second through space. The "real" tree is the tree the botanist describes, the tree that we point to and walk round. These existences, the *A*'s, have their definite and well-known place in the world order. The *B*'s, the data of our experience, are none the less real, but they are less really the star and the tree; they are effects in our consciousness (or on our organisms, if you choose, and are prepared to show *where* in the organism), representative to us of star and tree, but distinct existences. The visible light, the *B* of which the "real" star is the *A,* figures to us as the star when our attention is upon that visual experience. But *it* is not flying through space at so many miles a second; *it* is not composed of billions of whirling atoms, etc., etc. So, not to speak of the ambiguous status of these *B*'s in the world, there is as much reason for speaking of the *A*'s as the "real" things as there would be in discriminating between the "real" landscape and the picture of the landscape on a camera-plate. The latter is real enough, but it is not the real *landscape.*

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[5] *Ibid.*, page 395.

We have then our *A*'s, the "real things," and we have our *C*'s, the brain-perception-events which are effects and in some sense representatives of them, and our *B*'s, the data of conscious perception, which exist synchronously (or at least nearly so) with our *C*'s. According to what we proceed to do with our *B*'s will be our type of realism. The "natural" realist identifies them, *per impossibile,* with the *A*'s. The atomistic realist crams them all into one monad or arch-atom which is located somewhere, but no one can say where, in the brain. The dualistic realist asserts that they get into the causal chain in the midst of the *C*'s, but gives them no place in the three-dimensioned world; they somehow get their fingers in the brain-pie without really being there. Another type of realist puts them frankly in the brain, in between or hanging on to the *C*'s. One variety of this type of theory is that of Professor Montague, which puts the *B*'s wherever we speak of "latent energy" in the brain. And finally, though not of course exhausting all contemporary theories, the panpsychic realist (who has a better name for him?) identifies the *B*'s with the *C*'s, asserts that if we knew enough about what we call brain events we should discover that they really are conscious events.

This last theory is that of the present writer. Space forbids its defense at this time. But the object of this paper will have been attained if it sets any one thinking of the problem a little more sharply than before; if it helps any one to realize that there is a problem here. If we are to be realists, as we seem determined to be, let us think our realism through. Let us not think that by calling perception a "natural" or a "physical" process we have solved the very real and difficult problem of perception, or have won the right to jeer at idealists for clinging to their account of the matter.

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